



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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Secretary Visits Former Nursing Home Resident

Seniors and People with Disabilities Prefer Home and Community Based Care

MADISON – Today, Secretary Helene Nelson met with Edward Elmer – who has recently moved out of a nursing home and now lives at Harbor House II in Manitowoc. Wisconsin is working with disabled and elderly individuals to give them a choice about where they live, while still ensuring they receive the long term supports that they need by creating individualized care plans.

“Many older adults and people with disabilities prefer to get care in their home or community,” said Secretary Helene Nelson. “We are committed to giving people a choice about where they live, while making sure they get appropriate care. The money we now spend on nursing home care will follow the person into the community so they can be closer to family and friends.”

Governor Doyle included the Community Relocation Initiative in his 2005-2007 budget. The initiative gives elders and people with physical disabilities a choice as to where they will receive their long term care. People can remain in a nursing home or live with family, in assisted living, or in their own homes with the services they need brought to them.

Edward is 53 years old and has suffered several strokes, forcing him to live in a nursing home during the past year. Edward moved into a Harbor House II in February 2006 and is delighted he can now live on his own. Harbor House II is a Community Based Residential Facility, which houses five or more unrelated people together in a community setting. Services provided to residents include room and board, supervision, support services, and may include up to three hours of nursing care per week.

Wisconsin is on target to move 1,440 people out of nursing homes and into community based settings during the next two years. The long term goal is to relocate anyone who wants to move, who can be served in the community within available resources. The state expects to save \$9 million in the Medicaid budget during the two year period because home and community care is, on average, less expensive than nursing home care.

“The initiative is a win-win for residents and for Wisconsin taxpayers,” notes Secretary Nelson.

There are waiting lists in nearly every county for community based long-term care funding. Statewide, 6,000 elders and people with physical disabilities are on the waiting lists. More than 500 people on those lists live in nursing homes and are interested in relocating.

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In October 2005, more than 500 county and nursing home staff attended seven forums held around the state to learn to identify candidates for relocation and to develop collaborative relationships that will help people successfully transition to the community. Before a person moves, an individualized care plan must be developed to meet that person's needs and preferences.

People may be eligible to move out of a nursing home into a community based setting if:

- Medicaid pays for their nursing home care
- They are 65 years or older or have a physical disability
- They have an ongoing need for long-term care services
- The person has resided in a nursing home for 100 days or more, or be expected to do so

People interested in relocating from a nursing home should inform their nursing home social worker or contact their local county human services department and ask for a relocation assessment.

Visit http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/ltc_cop/COP.HTM for more information about community based long term care options.

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